

Warriors show off vocal talents



By Tech. Sgt. Mike Webb
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Rock 'n' roll, country, rhythm and blues, oldies, classical standards; Kunsan's Karaoke Nights offer a wide range of selection for those aspiring "Kunsan Crooners" Fridays and Saturdays from 8 p.m. to midnight.

Many people consider Karaoke a fad, but fads come and go. Karaoke has come full-circle since its inception some 30 years ago in Japan, and it's more popular than ever.

The word Karaoke (pronounced "kar-e-o-ke") literally means "empty orchestra," in the same manner that Karate means, "empty hand." Music tracks are produced on compact discs with lyrics that scroll across a television screen while the Karaoke singer provides the lead vocals. Because of copyright laws, the songs are created in the style of the original artist.

Kunsan's Karaoke Nights offer singers a top-notch sound system and a selection of classic and up-to-date songs that number close to 3,000 titles. There is something for everyone at Karaoke. It is a fun and fulfilling pastime for many people at the Wolf Pack.

Most people who sing at Karaoke have their favorite songs that they will belt out in front of an appreciative audience. Some come and try out new songs that they have always enjoyed. With the camaraderie evident at the Wolf Pack, it's not unusual to hear songs such as "Friends in Low Places" or "We are the Champions" echoing out the doors of the community center on a late Friday night.

Some people will sing in front of the crowd on a dare, but most do it for the sheer pleasure of singing their favorite song in front of the crowd. This is their chance for three and a half minutes of fame. Most people don't realize that the

song they enjoy singing in the shower or in their car actually sounds good when performed with the "empty orchestra." Karaoke seems to be the right medicine for stress and a fun way to spend an evening with friends.

To purists, calling Karaoke "singing" is like calling a paint-by-the numbers portrait art or ketchup a vegetable; however, Karaoke actually showcases the vocal talents and stage appearance of the singer. To serious devotees, Karaoke offers a chance to make friends, kindle musical connections and take a shot at those few minutes of fame.

The Karaoke Jockey (or host) is the one who helps ensure the show is entertaining to everyone involved. He or she is the first one to applaud the performance and is ready to help the singer get through the song if the singer finds it a little too much to handle.

For people who love music and want to be a part of Karaoke, this is an excellent opportunity to do so; plus it's a great way to boost your self-esteem and confidence. People who are very shy and full of self-doubt blossom when given the opportunity to perform their favorite song. The Karaoke crowd is big on pats on the back, words of encouragement and even hugs. A lot of folks who start out cannot sing, but the more they're encouraged, the more they practice, the better they get and once bitten, they just can't imagine not singing Karaoke. It gives people a chance to showcase their talent more than just for fun. For others, it's just a way of having a great time.

So, if you've been singing for years and want to try some new songs, or you want to test your vocal talents for the first time, visit the Falcon Community Center on Karaoke nights and join the fun. For more information call 782-4679.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Paul Watson, 8th CS/VI

Above: Staff Sgt. Richard Ditmars, 8 Security Forces Squadron, sings "Time of your life" Friday at the Falcon Community Center's karaoke night. Above Left: Staff Sgt. Chris Houde, 80th Fighter Squadron, sings "Deacon Blues." Karaoke equipment is provided by the 8th Services Squadron and is run by volunteers.